

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"The dangers principally to be apprehended from regal government, relate to the two articles, *taxation* and *punishment*. In every form of government, from which the people are excluded, it is the interest of the governors to get as much as they can. Wisely, therefore, hath the British constitution guarded the safety of the people, in this respect; for, every law, which, by the remotest construction, may be deemed to levy money upon the property of the subject, must originate, that is, must be first assented to, in the House of Commons; and the application also of the public supplies, is watched with the same circumspection as the assessment, many taxes being annual, the produce of others appropriated to specific services, and the expenditure of all of them being accounted for in the House of Commons."—PALEY: Moral and Political Philosophy; Book VI. Chap. VII.

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\* \* Agreeably to the notification, given in the preceding Number, I was preparing to publish, in this Number, the Intended Dispatch of the Court of Directors; but, when I came to look through the collection of documents, in which it has been published by the Court of Directors, I found, that it could not, consistent with that justice and fairness, with which I always have acted, be published by me, unaccompanied with the other documents, and I found that the whole would occupy a space so large as to exclude from the Register all other matter whatsoever for two, if not for three, weeks; and, therefore, important as I think this particular subject, I could not, at this time, bring myself to resolve upon such exclusion. A few weeks hence, perhaps, when the interesting points now in agitation before parliament shall have been decided, or, at least, settled for the time, an opportunity for the insertion will offer.

## TO THE ELECTORS OF HONITON.

### LETTER I.

GENTLEMEN,—Upon the principle that example is more powerful than precept, and that, to the producing of virtuous actions nothing is more conducive than the bestowing of just praise on those who have virtuously acted, it was, perhaps, my duty, in common with that of other public writers, to have, before now, recorded, commended, and honoured, your discernment and public-spirit, as exemplified in your choice of Mr. ROBSON as a member in the present parliament, and in the truly disinterested and constitutional manner in which that choice was made. But, Gentlemen, an opportunity now offers for our discharging this duty in a manner which will compensate for the delay; because our eulogium upon your conduct now comes forth accompanied with proofs the most satisfactory of its beneficial effects.

Having witnessed the enormous abuses lately, by inquiry, brought to light, with re-

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gard to the expenditure of the public-money, and having traced that inquiry back to the repeated, though then unsupported, exertions of Mr. ROBSON; having perceived, that, but too many of those persons, into whose hands devolved the finishing of what he so well began, were actuated by motives very different from his; having seen, that those persons were ready to accede to, nay themselves to propose, a bill of indemnity for Mr. Pitt, who himself had connived at a gross violation of the law, in lending £40,000 of the public money, without interest, to two members of the then parliament; and, finally, having seen these very same persons, these pursuers of abuses under the administration of Mr. Pitt, propose to vote away, and actually vote away, £40,000 of the public money to pay the debts of that Mr. Pitt, and that, too, upon the ground, as by them explicitly stated, of his "public merits:" having all this before your eyes, you naturally looked back to Mr. ROBSON, the man with whom the inquiry originated, and who had had no participation in the compromises, the inconsistencies, and the abandonment of principle exhibited in the subsequent proceedings thereon. You saw, in Mr. ROBSON, no sycophant, either of the court or the populace; no seeker for place, either by cringing at a levee or by hollow professions to the people; you saw, in him, no warrior against the Treasury Bench, no stickler against the free use of the King's prerogative in appointing his servants, but a determined enemy of corruption and of all abuses, through those servants committed, and, provided these were prevented, caring very little who those servants might be; in short, you saw, in Mr. ROBSON, a plain, honest, and independent man, wanting nothing from the public, either for himself or his relations, having the good of his country warmly at heart, and having industry and resolution sufficient to bring his wishes into action. Such were the reasons for which you chose him to be your representative in parliament;



and, it is the bounden duty of all those of your fellow subjects, who have the means in their hands, to acknowledge to you publicly, and to proclaim to the world, that experience has already proved, that your reasons were well-founded, that you have not been deceived, and that, in the effect as well as in the motive, you have a just claim to the praise and the gratitude of your country.

It is, Gentlemen, but a few weeks, since, as the consequence of your choice, as the consequence of your unshackled and constitutional exercise of that right, so valuable in itself, and once so dear and so much revered by Englishmen, that MR. ROBSON was returned to the House of Commons; yet, as will appear from the report of a debate and proceeding which I propose here to lay before you, he has already done more than any member of this present parliament towards the correction of those abuses in the expenditure of the public money, which are now, by all men, except the mere slaves of corruption, acknowledged to exist, and which, there is no one to deny, do greatly contribute to the weight of those burdens that are weighing us to the earth. But, before we proceed to the particular subject thus placed before us, and even before we come to a statement of the circumstances which led to the proceeding in question, it is not unnecessary that we advert, for a moment, to the doctrine of the constitution as touching the powers and duties of members of the House of Commons. The celebrated writer, from whom I have taken the motto to this paper, represents the *power of the purse* as the sole security for the liberties, properties, and the lives of the people; and, if this was always so, how much more necessary is it to cling to the doctrine now, when there is a regular army of 200,000 men in these kingdoms, about 30,000 of whom are *foreigners*? But, Gentlemen, *what* is this "power of the purse," and what is the use of talking about it; what is its use to you and me; how can we possibly derive any benefit from it, unless our representatives, I mean, *any one of them*, can bring before parliament proof, if it exist, of frauds in the *expenditure* of the public money? The House of Commons, PALEY tells us, is to *watch over* the expenditure of the public money; and this is the language of all those who have praised our constitution of government. They tell us, that we *tax ourselves*, and that we ourselves have a *check and controul over the expenditure*; and this they explain by saying, that we choose members of the House of Commons to *act for us*, and that whatever *they* do is done by *us*. Well, then, Gentlemen, have not our

representatives the right of inquiring *how* the money has been expended? And, how is such an inquiry ever to *begin*, unless some *one* man begins it? And, can you possibly conceive any good reason for checking any inquiry into the expenditure of the public money, from whatever quarter the first motion for such inquiry may come?

Now, Gentlemen, previously to my submitting to you the report of the proceeding, in which MR. ROBSON has taken so considerable and so useful a part, and which, as you will see, related to the wasteful expenditure in the BARRACK-DEPARTMENT, it will be necessary to state to you, with somewhat more precision than they may as yet have reached you, the circumstances which led to it.

The disclosures, with regard to Lord Melville and Mr. Trotter, gave rise to public observation respecting the abuses in other departments; and, it was proposed, by the then *Opposition*, who are now *ministers*, to move for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the MILITARY BRANCH in general. Mr. Pitt, the then minister (whose debts, observe, *we* have since paid!), thought it would be better for *himself* to have the appointment of this Commission; and, accordingly, he brought in a bill for the purpose, and, in the month of June last, five men, picked out by himself and OTHERS, were appointed by law. To work this Commission went, beginning with the Barrack-Department, and not, as one might have expected, with that of the office of COMMANDER IN CHIEF, that being, certainly, the head department belonging to the army; but, upon reference to the act, I find, that that particular office, was, for some reason or other (a very sufficient one, no doubt), not included; so that, *there*, even these Commissioners, have no power of inquiry at all. But, at any rate, upon the Barrack-Department they began; and, in the space of *nine months*, the *seven Commissioners and their clerks*, produced to the House of Commons their first report, contained in 111 *pages of loose print*, being, in the whole, about three times as much print as is contained in this letter, which, on this 22d of May, I am writing to you, and which must be finished and printed by to-morrow night at 12 o'clock! And, Gentlemen, what is the subject matter of the report? Is it a statement in *result*? No: it consists of the evidence taken down, as well as of the observations thereon; and, it relates to *one single little point* in the affairs of the Barrack-Office, namely, the arrears due from the Barrack-Master General to the public; as to

which arrears I will, begging leave to digress for the purpose, give you a brief account. The report, thus made to the House of Commons, states, that DELANCEY, the Barrack-Master General, by the means of *incorrect* statements, had drawn from the Treasury large sums which he ought not to have drawn; that GREENWOOD, an army agent, who was the Treasurer to the Barrack-Office, and who was also the private agent of De Lancy, did, in the years 1803 and 1804, transfer 11,096 of the money drawn for the Barrack-Office, to De Lancy's *private* account, instead of applying it to meet demands upon the Barrack-Office; and that, upon the whole of his account, DELANCEY stood indebted to the public (to say nothing of the large sum for *interest*) to the amount of 197,415. This report, which had cost nine months in making out, Mr. Robson had seen lie nearly two months longer upon the table of the House of Commons unnoticed by the ministers, when he obtained information relative to some flagrant abuses and peculation in the Barrack-Department in the Isle of Wight; and, upon obtaining this information, he, on the 10th instant, came into his place in the House, where, like an honest representative of the people, he moved for the production of the papers, which, in the following report of the debate of that day, you will find accurately described.

“ Mr. ROBSON rose to bring forward his  
“ promised motion for the production of  
“ certain documents relative to the Department of Barracks, with a view to institute an inquiry into certain gross abuses in that Department, through the wasteful expenditure of the public money. He said it was now 4 years since he had ventured to obtrude himself upon the attention of the House, by some observations, and a motion, on the very subject which it was now his purpose to offer to their consideration; namely, the scandalous abuses then existing in the Barrack Department; and he, on that occasion, warned the House of the enormity of those abuses, upon which he had not the good fortune of being able to institute, at that time, any inquiry; but which now were palpably proved to have existed to the full extent which he then asserted, by the Report of the Military Commissioners now in his hand, and which for some weeks had lain, most unaccountably, unnoticed upon their table: and he now ventured to say, that had his advice been then taken, many millions of the public money would have been saved, and no oc-

“ casion would have existed for laying such  
“ a Report before Parliament. It was now  
“ some years since the House had been in  
“ the habit of voting large sums of money  
“ for the erection of Barracks in various  
“ parts of the kingdom; but those votes  
“ had, of late years, increased to an enormous extent. Last year it was 2,300,000l.  
“ and for the present year it was 1,700,000l.  
“ Having upon a former occasion, attempted in vain to induce the House to go into  
“ some investigation, finding his former  
“ opinions justified by the Report now before the House, and desirous once more  
“ to bring forward the subject to the notice  
“ of parliament, it was natural for him to  
“ look a little into the cause why this expenditure had so increased, and the more  
“ so after he had heard the plea of necessity which the ministers had set up as a  
“ reason for the heavy taxes they had recently imposed upon the people. He felt  
“ it incumbent upon him, now that the  
“ reins of government had passed into the  
“ hands of other ministers, who, he sincerely trusted would offer no impediment  
“ to fair inquiry, to ascertain, if possible  
“ what became of those enormous sums so  
“ voted. At present it was his intention to  
“ move for the production of certain papers  
“ relative to the Barrack Department, for  
“ the purpose of investigating some very recent transactions. Without entering into  
“ any detail on the subject in the present  
“ instance, he should proceed to name the  
“ papers for which he intended to move.  
“ They were short and their production  
“ would neither be troublesome nor expensive, the first of which, and he would now  
“ move for it, was “ A List of the several  
“ Barns rented by Government and used as  
“ Barracks, in the Division of Sandown  
“ Bay, in the Isle of Wight; specifying the  
“ time when first taken, and also the weekly or annual rent thereon paid, respectively, from the time of their being so taken  
“ up to the 25th Dec. 1805, inclusive.”—  
“ Mr. MARTIN seconded the motion.—  
“ Lord HENRY PETTY said, that if the hon.  
“ gent. had done him the honour to make  
“ the slightest communication to him of his  
“ wishes or intentions upon the subject, he  
“ believed he should have been able to have  
“ satisfied the hon. gent. that his motion  
“ for papers and the purpose he had avowed, were rendered unnecessary, by another arrangement which had already taken  
“ place. As the hon. gent. had not thought  
“ proper so to do, he would beg leave to  
“ say now, that, although he saw no objection whatever to the production of the



papers named in the hon. gent's motion, yet, at the same time, as the House had already appointed Commissioners, for the very purpose of the investigation avowed by the hon. member as his object, and had delegated to them its authority to inquire, with the utmost minuteness, concerning every expenditure in the Barrack, as well as other Military Departments; which Commissioners were proceeding with all the expedition in their power, consistently with the nature of the subjects referred to their examination; he would put it to the good sense of the hon. gent. whether it would not be much more orderly and consistent with the regular proceedings of parliament, first, to await the Report of those Commissioners, or to communicate to them any information that could aid or accelerate their inquiry, before he proceeded to call upon the House to institute another inquiry, to proceed at the same time, and upon the very same subject. He would submit to the hon. gent. whether it was a proper, whether it was a discreet procedure, while a Parliamentary Commission was occupied in this very inquiry, to supersede the authority delegated to them, without any alledged ground of imputation upon their proceedings, and to move for another inquiry upon the same topic. If, indeed, when they should make their Report, the hon. member should find any just cause to complain of their negligence, or partiality, or unnecessary delay, it would be competent to him to call upon the House for the inquiry now proposed; but until such an occasion should occur, he hardly could conceive the House would be disposed to comply with the hon. gent's wishes for such an inquiry.—Mr. ROBSON rose and said: If, Sir, my eyes did not convince me to the contrary, I should have conceived that it was the ghost of the late minister I have just heard. What the noble lord has just said is, word for word, the objection made by the minister four years ago, to a motion which I then made for inquiry upon the same subject, and I have brought down with me the Parliamentary Register to prove the fact. But, notwithstanding the disappointment I feel at such an answer coming from the noble lord, as one of his Majesty's present ministers, I shall persist, aye, inexorably persist, with the leave of the House, in my determination of having this business sifted to the very bottom. It cannot interfere with the Military Commission. But, am I to be told, that the House of Com-

mons has, in any case, abandoned its inquisitorial authority, and delegated it to any Board of Commissioners, so as to preclude itself from investigation upon any similar subject it may think necessary? The Military Commissioners have now been sitting almost a year, and what have they produced? Why, only one Report; and this Report, notwithstanding the enormous, corrupt, and profligate waste of the public money which it has exposed, has now lain nearly six weeks upon your table; and I take shame to myself as a member of this House that it has laid there so long unnoticed. As a member of parliament I have a right to inquire though a Commission is sitting. Don't tell me, Sir, that a Commission of Inquiry is sitting? Am I to be told, that the House of Commons, apprized as it is of such an enormous profusion of the public money, is to delegate its privilege of inquiry to any Commissioners of Barracks, or Commissioners of Accounts, or Commissioners of any sort, military or civil; and then wait a year or two until those Commissioners shall think proper to report their opinions? I can admit of no such argument. What do I sit in this House for, but as a guardian of the public purse? What is the duty of the House of Commons, but to watch over and controul the public expenditure? Am I then, as a member of Parliament, to be denied the right of calling for papers, to inform myself, and the House, upon the subject of public expenditure, in order to institute inquiry, if necessary? I never will listen to such an argument; as that parliament is bound to wait, year after year, the slow progress of a Board of Commission, before it can proceed to the prompt steps necessary on the discovery of any prominent or enormous instance of profusion or speculation. What appears by this Report? Why, that 184 unsettled accounts were then before the Commissioners, not yet entered upon. Let not this House be told, then, that this subject is already before Commissioners of Inquiry, who may sit year after year, before the result of their inquiries are known, while the House is, in the mean time called upon to vote, year after year, new and enormous supplies, without inquiring how the past has been expended. The House without the grossest dereliction of its duty, cannot any longer persevere in such a mode of proceeding. How long, I would ask the noble lord, has this account of the Barrack Department been bandied about



“ from one office to another for investigation, without effect? First, it was sent to the Treasury; from thence it was referred to the Auditor of Public Accounts; then it was sent to the Secretary at War; and, at last, the system blew itself up, and corruption and venality had wrought their own reform. But the fact not to be denied, is, as I stated *four* years ago, that the expenditure in the Barrack Department has grown to an enormous amount. Why, I ask, has not parliament done its duty and prevented the progress in time? The purpose I have in view, is to examine the old accounts, in order to prevent similar profusion from occurring in future. I wish also to procure the protection and justice of parliament for many of those persons who have had the misfortune to give credit to a considerable amount to the Barrack Department, whose accounts now remain *ten* years unsettled, and whose families may be driven to ruin and beggary while they are waiting the tardy investigation of the Military Commissioners. I do not mean to charge any individual with a criminal misapplication of the public money. I am only desirous to do justice, and to ascertain where the fault lay; and I believe the Barrack Master General will turn out to be a very ill-used man, in the delay of settling his accounts.—Lord H. PERRY appealed to the House, whether government could be said to have lost any time in proceeding on the suggestions of the Report of the Military Commissioners. He had himself made a distinct statement to the House on the subject of that Report. He did not deny the right of member of parliament to interfere with the inquiry delegated to the Commissioners. He only appealed to the hon. gent's discretion, an appeal of which, after what he had just heard, he should be inclined to doubt the success. —Mr. BASTARD recommended to the hon. gent. to substitute the word “Buildings” instead of “Barns,” and to make the motion general.—Mr. ROBSON thanked the hon. gent. but would defer that till another day.—The question was then put upon the first motion and agreed to. The hon. gent. then moved, for a “Copy of a Letter to the late Secretary at War, dated 29th Dec. 1805, from the then Barrack Master of Sandown Bay division, enclosing Proposals on the part of Mr. James Day of Brading, for the building of a Barrack at Brading.”—Mr. PERCEVAL wished the hon. gent. would explain to the House what was the

object of his motion, and the nature of the letter.—Mr. ROBSON observed, that he was prepared to give an answer, but he thought he was entitled to the papers upon the grounds he had already stated. He observed, that there seemed a disposition to resist him in every step he advanced upon the subject, instead of thanking him for his endeavours to expose to the House a system of delinquency in the public expenditure. His object in moving for this paper, the contents of which he already knew, was to produce what the learned gent. would call legal evidence.—The SPEAKER having looked at the written copy of the motion, wished to know whether the letter alluded to, was a letter to or from the Secretary at War.—Mr. ROBSON. *From,* Sir, if you please.—The SPEAKER. The hon. member having in his verbal motion spoken of the letter which is the subject of it, as being a letter from the Secretary at War, and the written motion being for a letter to the Secretary at War, the object of my question is to know which the hon. member meant.—Mr. ROBSON. *To,* Sir, if you please; as it is written in the paper now in your hand. (*A Laugh*).—Mr. PAULL said, he was confident that if his hon. friend had not felt himself perfectly acquainted with the business he had undertaken and the objects of the motion he had offered, he would not have moved them. His hon. friend had moved for papers upon a subject of grave and serious importance, no less than a gross and corrupt profusion of the public money, to which it was at all times the duty of that House to attend; and he thought his hon. friend had experienced a levity of treatment ill comporting with the gravity of the House, or the respect due to one of its members.—Lord H. PERRY was not aware that there was any ground for the charge of levity, when the House had discovered every disposition to grant the information required. He trusted the House would act always with becoming gravity, and that when the papers granted for its information were produced, it would not countenance any proceeding upon them derogatory to the Commission it had appointed.—Mr. ROSE did not think it decent or becoming to charge the House with levity. He was surprised that the hon. gent. who made the motion should refuse to explain to the House what was the object of it. He was intirely of opinion with the noble lord, as to the impropriety of instituting an inquiry in that House at the same



“ time that Parliamentary Commissioners  
 “ were employed in the investigation else-  
 “ where, who had power to call for papers  
 “ and to examine witnesses on oath.—Mr.  
 “ W. SMITH was convinced the hon. mover  
 “ had too much pleasantry and good hu-  
 “ mour to feel hurt, if a smile was excited  
 “ in the House by the uncertainty he had  
 “ evinced on his own motion, as to whether  
 “ the letter for which he moved was *to* or  
 “ *from* the Secretary at War. He thought  
 “ it more regular for the Commission to go  
 “ on and do its functions, and afterwards  
 “ for the hon. gent. to come forward with  
 “ his motion, if he should then deem it ne-  
 “ cessary.—Mr. ROBSON explained, that  
 “ the motion was written in the sense in  
 “ which he wished to have it put, but the  
 “ hand-writing not being the most legible  
 “ he had inadvertently read one word for  
 “ the other.—Mr. HILEY ADDINGTON  
 “ still pressed for an answer. Could the  
 “ House, he asked, enter into the inquiry  
 “ when there was a Parliamentary Commis-  
 “ sion actually sitting?—Mr. ROBSON  
 “ thought he had made out a strong case  
 “ for inquiry. If the letter he had moved  
 “ for had been attended to, there would  
 “ have been an absolute saving of 100 per-  
 “ cent. to the public.—Mr. CALCRAFT  
 “ thought there never was a case on which a  
 “ motion for the previous question could so  
 “ properly be put. Unless suspicions were  
 “ entertained of the Commissioners, he did  
 “ not see how the House could proceed far-  
 “ ther. It had delegated its authority for  
 “ the present to those Commissioners, and  
 “ till there was some ground made out, that  
 “ they were not doing what was right, he  
 “ thought it would be improper to interfere  
 “ with their proceedings, and should there-  
 “ fore move the previous question.—Mr.  
 “ BASTARD could not agree with the hon.  
 “ gent. that inquiry in that House should  
 “ stop, because inquiry happened to be  
 “ going on elsewhere. He did not think  
 “ that parliament by delegating its power to  
 “ a Commission, did thereby preclude itself  
 “ from adverting to the subject if it thought  
 “ proper.—Mr. ROBSON was sorry that  
 “ the hon. gent. had not been in the House  
 “ to move the previous question upon his  
 “ first motion. By moving for the previous  
 “ question the House would put itself in the  
 “ situation of having ordered one paper,  
 “ which was of no use, unless explained by  
 “ those which there was now a disposition  
 “ to refuse. To say, continued the hon.  
 “ gent. that a commissioner is equal to a  
 “ member of parliament is ridiculous. Are  
 “ there not men in this House as good as

“ any commissioners can be? All I ask for  
 “ is two or three short letters which a clerk  
 “ can copy out in half an hour. Give me  
 “ but these, and I will take upon me to  
 “ prove that there has been a corrupt and  
 “ profligate profusion in a branch of our ex-  
 “ penditure which has cost the country 10  
 “ or 12 millions, and I pledge my character  
 “ as a member of parliament to do it. What  
 “ am I to think, Sir, when the Treasury  
 “ Bench start up and move the previous  
 “ question on such an occasion? I am re-  
 “ solved to take the sense of the House day  
 “ after day, till I see that there is no inten-  
 “ tion to keep the public accounts *private*.  
 “ And this at a time, Sir, when the people  
 “ of England are loaded with new and into-  
 “ lerable burthens, and when every man is  
 “ called on to shed the last drop of his blood,  
 “ and to deliver up the last guinea from his  
 “ bureau for the defence of the country!  
 “ Surely, upon cool reflection the hon. gent.  
 “ (Mr. Calcraft) will withdraw his motion!  
 “ —Mr. CALCRAFT said that nobody was  
 “ more fond of inquiry than he was, and it was  
 “ because an inquiry was actually going on,  
 “ that he thought it proper to move the pre-  
 “ vious question. He advised the hon. gent.  
 “ to give his papers to the Commissioners  
 “ who might make a Report upon them.  
 “ Had he been in the House when the first  
 “ question was put, he should certainly have  
 “ moved the previous question upon it.—  
 “ Lord HENRY PETTY said, he felt himself  
 “ justified in supporting the previous ques-  
 “ tion moved by his hon. friend, specifically  
 “ on the grounds that the hon. gent. had  
 “ not satisfied the House as to the nature of  
 “ the papers for which he had moved. In  
 “ supporting the previous question, how-  
 “ ever, he desired expressly to disclaim any  
 “ wish of precluding inquiry, or any denial  
 “ of the undoubted right of every member  
 “ of that House to move for any papers he  
 “ might think necessary. But the question  
 “ of right was one thing, and the expedien-  
 “ cy of exercising that right in all cases,  
 “ quite another: there might be many  
 “ rights unquestionable in the possession of  
 “ many men, but there were many cases in  
 “ which it might be wise and expedient to  
 “ dispense with the exercise of them. The  
 “ present he conceived to be one of those  
 “ cases: but by opposing the hon. member's  
 “ wishes on this occasion, he by no means  
 “ meant to preclude him from the fullest in-  
 “ formation he should feel it necessary to  
 “ demand upon this subject at a future day,  
 “ when those Commissioners should have  
 “ finished their inquiry, to which, under  
 “ the authority they possessed of examining



“ evidence upon oath, they were more com-  
 “ petent to accomplish than any inquiry that  
 “ could be carried on by that House. —  
 “ Mr. MARTIN said, he thought it his duty  
 “ to stand up in defence of a gent. who, he  
 “ was convinced, was desirous of doing good  
 “ to the public, and who ought to be sup-  
 “ ported in his honest endeavours to do his  
 “ duty, and was of opinion he had made out  
 “ his case. — Mr. ROBSON asserted that  
 “ there would have been a saving of 100 per  
 “ cent. on the transaction, if the letter he  
 “ moved for had been attended to. Surely,  
 “ Sir, said the hon. gent. this case is clear  
 “ enough! My motion seems to cut upon  
 “ both parties, the goers out and the comers  
 “ in. The previous question is a thing that  
 “ I hold cheap. In my motion *four* years  
 “ ago respecting the £19.10. business, when  
 “ I wanted to see the Bill-book, I was met  
 “ with the previous question. The motion  
 “ on the 10th Report was also attempted to  
 “ be done away by the previous question;  
 “ that famous Report which has excited the  
 “ attention of all Europe, nay, I might say  
 “ of all the world. My motion then did  
 “ good, and this will also do good; for ever  
 “ since that time government acceptances  
 “ have been regularly paid. — He then moved  
 “ for a Copy of proposals transmitted by the  
 “ Barrack Master of the Sandown Division  
 “ to the Secretary at War, on the part of  
 “ Mr. James Day, of Brading, for the  
 “ building of a Barrack at Brading. — Mr.  
 “ ROSE thought it would have been much  
 “ the better way, if the hon. gent. had stated  
 “ to the Commissioners what had come to  
 “ his knowledge about this business. —  
 “ Mr. BOURNE agreed with the last speaker,  
 “ and observed, that those Commissioners  
 “ had greater powers in this respect than the  
 “ House itself, as they could examine upon  
 “ oath. — Mr. CALCRAFT said, that as all  
 “ the objects could be obtained by the Com-  
 “ missioners, he should move the previous  
 “ question on this motion also. — Mr.  
 “ PAULL said, that his hon. friend had given  
 “ sufficient grounds for his motion, by sta-  
 “ ting that a clerk could copy out in half an  
 “ hour what would enable him to prove that  
 “ gross frauds had been committed. — Mr.  
 “ BASTARD said, as the hon. gent. had stated  
 “ that 100 per cent. might be saved, he  
 “ thought that a sufficient ground. He  
 “ wished to know what security we had that  
 “ the public would not continue to pay this  
 “ sum, till the Commissioners had reported  
 “ upon it. — Mr. HUSKISSON, as the hon.  
 “ gent. had stated that the granting a few  
 “ papers would enable him to prove such  
 “ gross abuses, thought it would not be

“ right to wait till the Commissioners might  
 “ have leisure to inquire into the business.  
 “ — Lord H. PETTY said, that as the hon.  
 “ gent. had now assigned some reason for his  
 “ motion, he should consent with the leave  
 “ of his hon. friend (Mr. Calcrafft) that the  
 “ previous question should be withdrawn.  
 “ — Mr. HUSKISSON wished the hon.  
 “ mover would state the object for which he  
 “ moved for these papers. — Mr. ROBSON  
 “ then confessed, that the shameful waste  
 “ of money he complained of was not only  
 “ in building the barracks, but in the rent  
 “ of the barns, which might have been  
 “ got for a quarter of the money. —  
 “ Sir J. NEWPORT said, this was quite a  
 “ different thing: the motion was about  
 “ building barracks, while the meaning of  
 “ the hon. gent. was about renting barns.  
 “ He thought the hon. member should state  
 “ what object he had in view, as the House  
 “ could never get through their business, if  
 “ every individual member might move for  
 “ whatever papers he pleased, without as-  
 “ signing any reason, and if the House were  
 “ to consider themselves always bound to  
 “ grant papers when moved for. — Mr. W.  
 “ SMITH suggested to the hon. mover, that  
 “ he had better withdraw his motions for  
 “ the present, and bring them forward in a  
 “ more distinct form on an early day, sup-  
 “ pose on Monday. — Mr. ROBSON re-  
 “ fused, and said he should be content if his  
 “ motion were put upon the Journals, as it  
 “ would then be upon record that  
 “ he, at least, had done his duty. —  
 “ Mr. VANSITTART begged the hon. gent.  
 “ would give the House some explanation  
 “ why he wished for these papers? He  
 “ might understand his own motions, but  
 “ certainly he had not succeeded in making  
 “ him understand them. — Mr. ROBSON  
 “ said, he had already explained himself  
 “ sufficiently; he would not submit to be  
 “ examined and questioned as if he was  
 “ a witness at the bar: as a member of par-  
 “ liament he thought it beneath his dignity  
 “ to wait upon any set of Commissioners,  
 “ standing in a hall, going up one stair-case  
 “ and down another in pursuit of them.  
 “ — Lord H. PETTY thought, that if  
 “ the hon. gent's sense of the dignity of  
 “ a member of parliament would not allow  
 “ him to answer a question put to him in  
 “ that House, or to explain why he brought  
 “ forward motions, the House would proba-  
 “ bly think it was agreeable to their dignity,  
 “ as members of parliament, not to give any  
 “ countenance to such motions. He should  
 “ therefore again move the previous ques-  
 “ tion — Mr. W. SMITH took notice of



" what fell from the hon. mover, " that he  
 " only wished to have his motions on the  
 " Journals." This certainly was not a suf-  
 " ficient reason for the House agreeing to  
 " them. He thought the best way would  
 " be at once to move the previous question  
 " upon all the motions. The previous ques-  
 " tion was then agreed to upon this ques-  
 " tion.—Mr. ROBSON then moved for a  
 " " Copy of the answer (if any) that was  
 " given, or communicated to Mr. James  
 " Day, in consequence of his making pro-  
 " posals to the Secretary at War, for the  
 " building of a barrack at Brading in the  
 " Isle of Wight; and, if no answer was  
 " given, information to that effect." Also,  
 " " A List of the several Barns rented by  
 " Government and used as Barracks in the  
 " division of Sandown Bay, in the Isle of  
 " Wight, specifying the rent now weekly or  
 " annually paid for each Barn, and also spe-  
 " cifying the precise time when any altera-  
 " tion (if any) in the rent of the said Barns  
 " took place." Upon these the previous  
 " question was also put and carried."—  
 " Mr. ROSE expressed his regret that the  
 " business would make its way into the pub-  
 " lic prints."

Thus, Gentlemen, ended the debate. The first paper (a paper of no use without the rest) was ordered to be produced; but, all the others, all those that were necessary to bring the abuse to light, were, in effect, refused; and, MR. ROBSON stood represented, as far as the proceeding could so represent him, as a person who had brought forward an unfounded complaint. But, before we proceed to further remarks, let us attend to the sequel of this proceeding. When the " previous question" was moved by MR. CALCRAFT (a person in the *Office of Ordnance*, observe), MR. ROBSON, as you will have seen, reminded the ministers, that the proceedings upon the occasion of the £19. 10s. bill of exchange had taught him to hold previous questions very cheap; and you will remember, that, upon that occasion, after having been called upon to retract his words; after his words had been taken down; after he had been actually threatened with the *censure of the House*, unless he retracted and begged pardon of the House, he made good his charge, and reduced the minister (one of the *present cabinet*) to the necessity of acknowledging, that the charge was just, and of getting rid of inquiry by a " previous question." Of this, as you will have seen, MR. ROBSON reminded the mover of the previous question, predicting, at the same time, that a similar fate would attend the present attempt to defeat his lauda-

ble purposes; and, accordingly, on Wednesday last, the 21st instant, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, LORD HENRY PETTY, the very person who had stood at the head of the opposition against Mr. ROBSON's motion, came to the House, and himself moved for those very papers, which he had before represented as improper to be called for. But, let us take his words, as given in the Morning Chronicle news-paper of this day, the 22d of May: " LORD HENRY PETTY rose and observed, that before he proceeded to the statement of the business of which he had given notice, he trusted the House would indulge him with their attention for a few moments, while he said something respecting what had lately passed in the House concerning the Barrack Department. It would be in the recollection of the House that when the honorable gentleman behind (Mr. Robson) brought forward some motions on that subject, one of them had been agreed to, while the previous question had been moved and carried with respect to the others. This, the House would recollect, had been done in the *absence of all explanation*, as to the object which the honorable gentleman had in view; that was intelligible to him, or, he believed, that could be intelligible to any person in the House. He had moved the previous question with a view to induce the honorable gentleman to come forward with the necessary information, and also with the intention, in case he should still refuse, to examine into the business himself, and find it out either with or without assistance. He now flattered himself that he had discovered the object of these motions. He found that they related to transactions which took place in 1805, respecting the barns hired as barracks in the division of Sandown Bay, in the Isle of Wight, which were paid for at a very extravagant rate, when a building for barracks was offered at a much more reasonable expense. He would, therefore, under these circumstances, move all the motions of the honorable gentleman, respecting which the previous question had been before carried, and also add a new motion, which would relate to the barrack-Master, who, it appeared, had hired these barns at an extravagant rent, and made an improper report with regard to the building offered as a barrack. It was right that he should be called upon to explain his conduct with respect to this transaction. He concluded by moving for all the papers that MR. ROBSON had before moved for, and





"the motion was *carried without a division*;" to which you, Gentlemen, will, doubtless, add the observation, that by a voice, equally unanimous, these identical motions had been *rejected* only four days before! Upon this motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, MR. ROBSON observed, "that when he had before made these motions, he had pledged himself to the House and to the country, as a member of parliament, to call their attention to an affair that highly deserved it. And now, after some days had elapsed, and *the affair was in the mouths of every body*, the minister, who had before moved the previous question, came down to the House and moved for them himself;" but, as MR. ROBSON further observed, some *apology* was, upon this occasion, necessary, if not to him, at least to the House. To which LORD HENRY PETTY replied, that, when the papers were before moved for, a sufficient notice had not been given, and that *no grounds* were laid for their production. MR. ROBSON rejoined; said "that he had given notice on the *Tuesday* of the motion that he made on the following *Friday*; that, as to grounds, he had very distinctly stated, that his object in calling the attention of the House to the subject, was, that *double the money* had been expended, in the case referred to, that ought to have been expended; and that" . . . . . but here he was CALLED TO ORDER by the Speaker, upon the ground, that he had spoken before in the debate!

In observing upon these proceedings, Gentlemen, the first thing that presents itself, is, the doctrine as to *notices* of motions; and, you will, doubtless, observe, that the giving of notices at all, upon any subject, is of quite modern invention; that it never was heard of until of late years; that, if the intentions of all parties were right and fair, there could be no one to desire any such thing; and, that if all the members of the House regularly attend in their places, as in duty they are bound, there can be no use whatever for a notice. Besides, to insist upon notices of motions is greatly and most dangerously to abridge the powers of individual members of parliament; may there not an emergency arise, when the safety of the state may depend upon the instantaneous making of a motion? Nay, do we not daily see the ministers making motions without any notice at all? And, indeed, notices of motions are entirely unknown to the laws and orders of the House, in which we have heard this very important

motion of MR. ROBSON set aside upon the alleged ground, in part, at least, of a want of notice. But, as MR. ROBSON himself observed, a notice *was* given in this case, and that, too, *four days* before the motion was made. Surely four days were enough to afford time for *preparation*! One would have thought, that the minister of finance would have panted for the moment, when some one should point out to him how the public money might be saved, at the time when he himself was endeavouring to convince us that it gave him so much pain to be compelled to add to our taxes! At the time when he was raising the rate of the Income Tax to ten per centum; was proposing a tax upon the raw material of our manufactories, and was proposing a tax upon beer brewed in private-houses! At a time when Mr. Fox was declaring, that, such was the state of our pecuniary concerns, that the ministry were "*driven to impose taxes that must affect the prosperity of some branch or other of our commerce*!"

The next thing that calls, and it most loudly calls, for your attention, is, the demand for "*grounds*," whereon to found a motion. With respect to which, on no transaction that occurs to me at present, can any "*explanation*" as to the "*object*" of a motion be demanded from the mover, consistently with the idea which we have always been taught to entertain of the rights and privileges of a member of the House of Commons, and, as to the expenditure of the public money, what object, other than that of a desire to know *how it has been expended*, need any member state as the *ground* of a motion? It is not as a right, or a privilege, that we ought to regard this; but, as a *duty*, as a duty incumbent upon every member of the House of Commons. And, when a member moves for an inquiry of this sort, upon what ground can any one pretend to call him to account as to the *object* that he has in view? And where, Gentlemen, is the right which any one possesses of inquiring into his motives, seeing, that unless he does make such inquiries, he is guilty of a manifest breach of his first and greatest duty? Perhaps we shall be told, that *the amount of the whole of the Public Expenditure* is annually laid before the House of Commons; and, that *there* MR. ROBSON ought to have looked for information. Such an account, that is to say, the account of the forgoing year, is, or *ought to be*, laid before the House on, or before, the 25th of March in each year; and, I must confess, that this account *ought* to convey some information; but, Gentlemen, this amount is a lumping

one; it lies in a very small compass, and, as to the immediate object of our attention, the whole of the Barrack-Expenditure, the whole of the immense sum drawn from us on account of Barracks, is accounted for in one single line, thus, and even in one single word, thus:

"BARRACKS - 1,786,048l."

This is all that MR. ROBSON would have found in the account for the year 1805; and, what shall we say of a member of the House of Commons, who would be satisfied with this? Who, merely by looking at this, should pretend that he had "*watched over* the expenditure of the public money?" From this account how was MR. ROBSON, or any body else, to know, or even to guess *how* the money had been expended? What *check*, does such a document form to a wasteful expenditure? It must be manifest to you, that it forms no check at all; and that it is the duty of every individual member to inquire how this enormous sum of more than a million and three quarters was expended upon barracks in one year; or that, if this be not his duty, he can be of no use in the House of Commons.

There was one argument, Gentlemen, which was used against Mr ROBSON upon the first occasion, which must not here be overlooked; to wit; that the affairs of the Barrack-Office being now before the *Commissioners of Military Inquiry*, there could be no occasion for any such matters to be taken up in the House of Commons; which argument was urged with great vehemence and with an air of triumph by LORD HENRY PETTY. Of the dangerousness of this doctrine one never can speak too often, nor in terms too strong; but, Gentlemen, how comes it, that this argument, which was so good on the Friday, was good for nothing at all on the next Wednesday? For, you will observe, that this same Commission was full as effective when LORD HENRY PETTY moved for the papers, as it was when MR. ROBSON moved for them. There must, then, one would naturally suppose, have occurred some cause for this change of doctrine; and, I think, you will agree with me, that MR. ROBSON was not very uncharitable in imputing the change to the impression, which, in the interim, did evidently appear to have been made upon the mind of the public. The detection and exposure of this instance of glaring inconsistency is, however, of no importance, when compared with the doctrine itself, which strikes at once at the very root of the constitution by taking from individual members of parliament, in their capacity and in their places, as members, to

begin and to prosecute inquiries as to the expenditure of the public money. The minister (and, in this case, it was Mr. Pitt) appoints a list of commissioners to inquire into the expenditure of the public money in the Military Department; and, if the existence of this commission is to take away the right of individual members of the House of Commons to move for and to prosecute any inquiry with regard to the expenditure of the public money in that department, there is, at once, half the power of the members taken away; for, at this time, the annual expenditure of the army and its appendages amounts to about *twenty millions*, and, in the account annually laid before the House of Commons, this expenditure does not occupy *twenty lines*! Again and again, therefore, I beg you, Gentlemen, and I beg, I beseech, every man in England, to whom the happiness and the honor of England are, in anywise, dear, to reflect upon the dangerousness of this doctrine. Let it but once be established; only let a refusal to suffer an individual member to inquire; let such a refusal, upon such a pretext, once grow into a precedent, and who does not perceive, that we shall have commissioners for every department, and, that all notion of a control in the expenditure of the public money will be given up. Let this doctrine be once established, and, very soon afterwards, the ministry and their boards of commissioners will know how to dispense with the House of Commons; and, indeed, of what use would that House, in such case, be; and what regard could the people have for it, or what confidence could they have in it. Excuse me, Gentlemen, for urging and re-urging this point; for, compared with this, of what importance to us are the disputes about Malta and Hanover? The *time*, too; that these commissioners take to make their inquiries, and the comparative *secrecy*, with which they conduct them, are well worthy of your consideration; for, if it took nine months merely to report upon the balances due from DE LANCEY to the public, how long, good God! would it have been ere they had come to the contracts in the Isle of Wight? I wish you to observe, too, that it is provided in the act constituting this Commission, that none of its members shall, during the time that they are Commissioners, "accept or hold any *Civil* office of profit, during pleasure, under His Majesty." But, they may accept and hold such offices *for life*; and as to *military* offices (which are all held during pleasure), they may accept and hold as many of them as the king, or any one



under him, will give them; and, just by way of illustration, I wish you to know, that, *since* the creation of this commission, the first commissioner, *Major General Hildebrand Oakes* has accepted, and that he does now hold, the office of *Colonel of a regiment*, worth from 1,200*l.* to 1,500*l.* a year! The second commissioner is a *Colonel Beckwith*; the third is a *Lieutenant Colonel Drinkwater*; either of whom may, of course, accept, at any time, of any military office, depending for duration upon the sole will of the king, or his advisers.

LORD HENRY PETTY, as you have seen, Gentlemen, seems, in his speech of Wednesday last, to say, that he has taken up the matter himself, because Mr. Robson did not understand what he was about. You have read a faithful report of the debate, Gentlemen, just as it took place; and, do you think, that Mr. Robson appeared not to understand what he ought to do? It is easy to set up a laugh. There is an affectation of this sort, which has been very fashionable; but, amongst many other foolish fashions, it is growing stale; and, I think, you will agree with me, that, if, upon a subject so serious, laughter was not disgusting, the laugh would not be against Mr. Robson. A man of very good sense, and even a very wise and a very clever man, may, in the haste of delivery, use the word *to* instead of *from*; and may, even from his laudable anxiety, be for a moment, confused; but what is this compared to such an instance of glaring, of . . . I would fain not, but I must, call it *peurile inconsistency*, as that exhibited in the conduct of LORD HENRY PETTY, who, after having spoken against the production of the papers on the Friday, upon the ground that the Military Commission was sitting, came, on the next Wednesday, and moved for those identical papers himself, the said Commission being still sitting? And, here, Gentlemen, I must repeat to you his words; I must save you the trouble of referring back to them, and must beg you to mark, and to retain them in your minds. He said, that, “if the honourable gent. had done him the honour to make the slightest communication to him of his wishes or intentions upon the subject, he believed he should have been able to have satisfied the hon. gent. that *his motion for papers* and the purpose he had avowed, were rendered unnecessary, by another arrangement which had already taken place. As the hon. gent. had not thought proper so to do, he would beg leave to say now, that, although he saw no objection whatever to the production of the

papers named in the hon. gent's. motion, yet, at the same time, as the House had already appointed Commissioners, for the very purpose of the investigation avowed by the hon. member as his object, and had DELEGATED to them its authority to inquire, with the utmost minuteness, concerning every expenditure in the Barrack, as well as other Military Departments; which Commissioners were proceeding with all the expedition in their power, consistently with the nature of the subjects referred to their examination: he would put it to the good sense of the hon. gent. whether it would not be much more orderly and consistent with the regular proceedings of parliament, first, to await the Report of those Commissioners, or to communicate to them any information that could aid or accelerate their inquiry, before he proceeded to call upon the House to institute another inquiry, to proceed at the same time, and upon the very same subject. He would submit to the hon. gent. whether it was a proper, whether it was a discreet, procedure, while a Parliamentary Commission was occupied in this very inquiry, to supersede the authority delegated to them, without any alledged ground of imputation upon their proceedings, and to move for another inquiry upon the same topic. If, indeed, when they should make their Report, the hon. member should find any just cause to complain of their negligence, or partiality, or unnecessary delay, it would be competent to him to call upon the House for the inquiry now proposed; but until such an occasion should occur, he hardly could conceive the House would be disposed to comply with the hon. gent's. wishes for such an inquiry.”—Yet, this same gentleman, who could give such a lesson upon good sense, order, regularity, propriety, discretion, and consistency, all which, on the Friday, were so directly opposed to the production of the papers, could, aye, and he actually did, come, into the same seat, and looked the same persons in the face, and moved himself for the production of those very same papers! This LORD HENRY PETTY is, Gentlemen, the representative of the University of Cambridge, which learned body have, too, the honour to claim him as a member; whence, in conjunction with what you have just seen, you may, I think, pretty safely conclude, that a man may swagger about a long while in a black gown and a four cornered cap without acquiring many of the faculties of a conjuror. The fact is, that the mere knack of making speeches, the mere



knack of twirling off strings of sentences, is no mark whatever of superiority of mind; but is, very frequently, a mark of the contrary; heads, like other things, being, in general, empty in proportion to the noise that they make. By the fools and the sycophants of the last twenty years, Mr. Pitt has been compared to CICERO and Mr. Fox to DEMOSTHENES, these being the two most famous orators of antiquity. What *they* might be besides talkers, whether they contributed to the prosperity, or the ruin, of their countries respectively, it would, perhaps, be difficult precisely to ascertain; but, as to *ours*, we know, that, under the sway of MR. CICERO, we have, as MR. DEMOSTHENES himself tells us, been brought into the last stages of national distress, and, indeed, without his telling us of it we know it very well; and, what is quite disheartening, we do not perceive the least sign of MR. DEMOSTHENES's intention to do better than his famed predecessor, whose debts, however, MR. DEMOSTHENES has, with great liberality, called upon us to pay. Let us be no longer thus amused, then; let us no longer be the sport of this sort of *brotherhood* amongst the pretenders to superiority of mind. Let us ask for the *proof* of their superiority: let us inquire whether our country has increased in domestic happiness and in consequence abroad, while it has been in their hands; and, if we find, that it has *decreased in both*, let us turn with contempt from their pretended superiority. To conduct the affairs of the government of a great nation demands great talents; talents such as few men, comparatively speaking, possess; but, not the talent of public speaking, which, though it may serve to gloss over bad measures, can be of no use whatever in the conceiving or adopting of good measures; and, as to a member of parliament, as far, at any rate, as relates to inquiries into the receipt and expenditure of the public money, all that he need possess, are, common sense, common industry, and common honesty, which last ingredient is, as to all the purposes for which a member of parliament is sent to the House, worth much more than the combined talents of CICERO and DEMOSTHENES. Gentlemen, you have done honour to yourselves in sending MR. ROBSON to parliament; it is the duty of us all to support him in his laudable efforts, by all the means in our power; it is our duty to stand by him, to lend him our assistance, to join him in his combat against the *brotherhood of placemen by trade*, who, whether *in* or *out*, will always support the abuses and corruptions that exist, and who, though they may hate one another, though

they may seek the destruction of each other, will, at any time, suspend their animosities, and most cordially combine to keep down, and, if possible, to destroy, any man, who, they are convinced, has the good of his country at heart.

There remains one other part of LORD HENRY PETTY's speech, Gentlemen, to which I am desirous of drawing your attention; I mean that, wherein he conveys a feeling of dissatisfaction at MR. ROBSON's not having made a previous communication *to him*, with regard to the object of his motion. What! is it come to this, then? is it become; is it actually become the custom for members of parliament to wait upon the minister, and know his pleasure, or, at the very least, his opinion, as to the propriety of making a motion before they make such motion? Is it really true, that the minister; that a person appointed by the king; that a *servant* of the king, is to be consulted by a member of parliament before such member can make a motion in his place in the House? What shall we hear next? Where is this to end? What are members of parliament finally to become? If in one case, so in all cases is this doctrine sound; and then, Gentlemen, let me ask you how we can, without the most shameful mockery, the most gross insult to our own understandings, affect to regard the members of the House of Commons as the "guardians of the public purse?" It is their business to watch the ministers, and, if they can make no motion for inquiry into the expenditure of the public money, without previously stating their *object* to those ministers and obtaining their consent to such motion, is it not evident that no *useful* motion of that sort will ever be made? MR. ROBSON acted as he ought; he came forward upon the ground of right as a member of the House of Commons; he firmly stood upon that ground; the public, seeing that his cause was their cause, stood by him; the press (I allude particularly and with hearty approbation to the *COURIER*, the *INDEPENDENT WHIG*, the *MORNING HERALD*, and the *MORNING ADVERTISER*) expressed the feeling of the public; and the result has, thus far, been what every honest man wished it to be.

But, Gentlemen, in our anxiety to maintain the principles upon which MR. ROBSON has undertaken this inquiry, we must not lose sight of the matter of the inquiry itself. You have seen, that MR. ROBSON, probably for the sake of avoiding complexity, has begun with one small point of the Barrack-office abuses, namely, the rent of



barns, used as barracks, in Sandown-Bay Division, in the Isle of Wight; and you have heard him state, that *double the money* was paid for such barns that ought to have been paid for them. But, what would you think, Gentlemen, if it should appear, that *five times* as much had been paid, in this case, as ought to have been paid? What would you think, if it should appear, that we have been paying for each barn *annually* as much as the *fee simple* of the barn is worth? What would you think, if it should appear, that we have been paying annually for each barn, for the mere shell of each barn, a sum nearly equal to the annual *rent of the whole farm*, on which such barn stands, and of which, of course, the barn forms a part? What would be your conclusion from such facts? What other conclusion could you form, than that a most profligate waste of the public money has prevailed in this department; that *here alone* nearly a million a year might be saved; that this sum now ought to be saved; and that, if it should be saved, we shall all have Mr. ROBSON and his informant to thank for it. And here, Gentlemen, bear with me, if I again press it upon you to observe, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has *now* confessed the existence of these shameful abuses, knew nothing at all of them until Mr. ROBSON made his motion, a fact, I think, quite sufficient to convince you of the great danger that would arise from "*delegating*" the powers of inquiry to boards of Commissioners. I wish to give credit where credit is due; and I do sincerely believe, that, until the motion of Mr. ROBSON led LORD HENRY PETTY to inquire, he knew nothing at all of the abuses we are speaking of. But, Gentlemen, the discoveries which his lordship has now made, will, if I am not greatly deceived in my conjecture, place some of *his colleagues* in an awkward predicament; for, by a reference to the motion, you will clearly perceive, that the representation of the Barrack-Master of Sandown-Bay Division, for the saving of the public money, though it was transmitted to the *late* Secretary at War, came under the consideration of the *present* Secretary at War; that, at any rate, in *his office* did Lord Henry Petty find those very documents, which have convinced him of the necessity of a speedy parliamentary inquiry into the matter; and, that the same person was Barrack-Master General last year is *still* the Barrack-Master General; and that, moreover, the Assistant Barrack-Master General, who made, as Lord Henry Petty now says, "the improper report," and

who, as he further says, "ought now to be called to account for it," is, *to this hour*, an Assistant Barrack-Master General! This discovery, observe, Gentlemen, LORD HENRY PETTY has made from documents that *already existed*; and, therefore, it behoves us to inquire, *where* they have existed? In *whose hands* they have lain, all this while, as inactive as a sleep-mouse? For, if it be now, upon a few hours of inquiry, on the part of LORD HENRY PETTY, become so evident that great abuses have taken place; if this has, as once appeared, and that, too, upon a bare inspection of the documents; what are we to think, and what ought the ministry to do, with regard to the persons, in whose hands these documents are, and under whose inspection they so long have been? Is not the conduct of these persons a proper and a necessary object of inquiry? For, if such an inquiry with *appropriate consequences*, do not take place, how can we reasonably entertain a hope, that abuses will not in future be committed? Anxiously, therefore do I hope that the inquiry will not stop at the conduct of the *inferior agents*, but that it will mount upwards to the source of the evil; at any rate, certain I am that the further proceedings in this, will furnish us with an excellent criterion, whereby to judge of the real views, with which the ministers have now brought forward their new plan for the examining into the public accounts; though, if we were to judge from the language of the Morning Chronicle, which is now the slave of the *Isis*, we should not entertain any very great degree of hope from the execution of this plan: "The measure," says that fallen print of this day (Friday, the 23d of May), "The measure proposed by Lord Henry Petty, for the institution of an effectual audit of the public expenditure, has justly engaged the most serious attention as well as gratitude of the public. It is a great and laudable attempt; and no part of it promises to be so useful as that which goes to check abuse *for the future*; for it is almost *vain to hope* for much benefit from the *revisal of what is past*. What check or audit can there be of the Commissariat Accounts of our famous campaign in Flanders, where a *convenient fire* at every depot settled the accounts of all Commissaries, Contractors, and Insupers? But it is a material thing to institute a new system; and that the check should go on hand in hand with the expenditure. Nor will it be enough to see that there are vouchers for the actual expense, but that the expense itself is *actually economical*. For instance, in the



" Report of the Barrack Department, we see that the barracks were built, at what is technically called measure and value, though it is well known that contracts for building, even on a small scale, are made at 25 per cent. under measure and value. General de Lancey well knows this fact. He has built for himself a beautiful villa in Surrey, and he boasts that it only cost him 1000l." This is perfectly consonant with the new doctrine of Mr. Fox; and perfectly consonant, too, with the wishes of the *Brotherhood*, whether in or out of office; for, to them, nothing, surely, can be so convenient. "What check or audit can there be of the Commissariat Accounts of our famous campaign in Flanders, where a convenient fire, at every depot, settled the accounts of the Commissaries, Contractors, and Insupers?" What a question is here to ask, and to be asked, too, by that same Morning Chronicle, that bellowed so loudly for punishment upon the head of Lord Melville and Mr. Trotter, because they had destroyed their books and accounts? The House of Commons and Westminster Hall still ring with the indignant reproaches of the late opposition (who are the present ministry) against those who wished to bury in oblivion the *past* with regard to Lord Melville and Mr. Trotter; and, do their writers now; good God! do they now tell us; now, the moment that their friends are in power; do they tell us; do they, with an air of langour, as if weary of inquiry, ask us *how* we are to make inquiry about the *burnt* accounts, relating to the Commissary-General's Department, during those ever-famed campaigns of *Flanders*, from which the DUKE OF YORK happily returned in a whole skin to go again on the no less famed campaign of the *Helder*, from which he also happily returned in a whole skin to command, with such distinguished celebrity, the army at home?

In coming, Gentlemen, by way of conclusion, to the practical application of the facts and observations here presented to you, let me, in the first place, caution you against the cry of *disaffection* and of *revolutionary designs*, which, upon all such occasions, is sure to be set up, first, by the innumerable swarm of peculators, and next, by the *Brotherhood* in general. It is their way to tell you, "abuses have always existed, in all countries; and, that, after all, this is the best government and the best country in the world;" the inference left to be drawn from which, is, that things must remain as they are, or that the government will be destroyed. So each of them

will declare to your teeth, if you push him to the point; and, so they say one and all. But, Gentlemen, if, by "disaffection," they mean, disaffection to the country and to our sovereign, clothed with all his constitutional authority; if, by "revolutionary designs," they mean designs tending to the destroying of the present orders in the state; if this be their meaning, their charge is utterly groundless, and it is equally malicious, because they know it to be false. It is the sincere desire of every good man, that the monarchy and that all the ranks and degrees in the state should remain unshaken; that the property, lawfully obtained, of every man should continue secure in the hands of its owner; but, it is also his sincere desire, that the people in general should be happy and free, as their forefathers were. And, Gentlemen, it is because we wish *not* to see things destroyed; it is because we *love* our country and its unimpaired constitution, in all its branches and in all its provisions; it is because the name, the laws, the liberties, and the renown, of England are dear to our hearts, that we anxiously seek to promote a *real* reformation of abuses, being fully convinced, that, unless such a reformation do take place, and that right speedily, a sweeping destruction will ensue. We have been told, Gentlemen, by the present ministers, that they are, by the pecuniary distresses of the state, "driven to impose taxes which must affect the prosperity of some branch or other of our commerce;" we have, in defence of every new tax, heard them urge the argument of hard and cruel necessity; in every other breath we have heard them exclaim, "money must be obtained!" And, gentlemen, at the same time that we hear these arguments and exclamations, we see at the Board of Admiralty, a gentleman who has recently declared, in open parliament, that, in the department of the navy, a saving of one third might be made. Add to this what has actually come to light in the Barrack Department; and, I think, you will not find it difficult to believe me, when I say, that, after the fullest consideration that I have been able to bestow upon all the branches of the national expenditure, my sincere opinion is, that, in the current expenses of the year, leaving quite a sufficiency to support the splendour of the throne and fully to reward every service rendered to the state, *one half* of the present expense might be *saved*; and, Gentlemen, this object; this object, the effecting of which is, in my opinion, absolutely necessary to the preservation of the

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monarchy, and even to that of our existence as an independant nation; this object in comparison with which all others in this world shrink into nothing, may be effected, and easily effected, by a few, and a very few, independent, honest, and zealous members of parliament; members of parliament, in short, like the honourable Gentleman, whose upright and useful endeavours have given rise to this letter, and for whose ability to serve us the thanks of the whole nation are due to the Electors of Honiton.

With an anxious hope, that you will pursue the good path, to walk in which you have begun, and that you will scorn to sell your birth-right for a mess of pottage to a venal slave who will take care to obtain a double mess in return,

I remain,

Gentlemen,

Your humble and obedient Servant,

WILLIAM COBBETT.

23d May, 1806.

#### PUBLIC PAPERS.

WAR WITH PRUSSIA.—*Order of Council for taking off the Embargo upon Vessels belonging to Hamburgh, &c.*

At the Court at the Queen's Palace, the 14th of May, 1806, Present, the King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.—His Majesty having taken into consideration the present state of Hamburgh and Oldenburgh, and the circumstances under which several vessels belonging to Bremen and Papenburgh, have arrived in the ports of the United Kingdom, is pleased, by and with the advice of his Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that the embargo now subsisting upon all ships and vessels belonging to Hamburgh and Oldenburgh, be taken off: and it is hereby further ordered, that the embargo be also taken off those vessels belonging to the towns of Bremen and Papenburgh, which had cleared out for ports of the United Kingdom previous to the Prussian Notification, dated the twenty-eighth of March last, whereby British ships were excluded from the ports of the Prussian dominions, and from certain other ports in the north of Europe: and that the said ships and vessels, with their cargoes, not being Prussian or enemies' property, be permitted to sail to any port not blockaded: and the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and the Judge of the High Court of Admiralty, are to give

the necessary directions herein, as may to them respectively appertain.

W. FAWKNER.

*Order of Council granting General Reprisals against the Ships, &c. of the King of Prussia. At the Court at the Queen's Palace, the 14th of May, 1806. Present the King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.*

Whereas during the interval which has elapsed since his Majesty found himself compelled, by the hostile measures of his Majesty the King of Prussia, to lay an embargo on the ships and goods belonging to his subjects, and to places under his controul, such hostile measures have not been discontinued: and whereas the town of Papenburgh cannot but be considered as dependent on, and under the absolute controul of Prussia; his Majesty therefore is pleased, by and with the advice of his Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, that general reprisals be granted against the ships, goods, and subjects of the King of Prussia, and of the town of Papenburgh, (save and except any ships to which his Majesty's licence has been granted, or which have been directed to be released from the embargo,) so that as well his Majesty's fleets and ships, as also all other ships and vessels that shall be commissioned by letters of marque or general reprisals, or otherwise, by his Majesty's commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, shall and may lawfully seize all ships, vessels, and goods belonging to the King of Prussia, or his subjects, or others inhabiting within the territories of the King of Prussia, or belonging to the town of Papenburgh, (except as aforesaid,) and bring the same to judgment in any of the Courts of Admiralty within his Majesty's dominions; and to that end, his Majesty's Advocate General, with the Advocate of the Admiralty, are forthwith to prepare the draft of a commission, and present the same to his Majesty at this Board, authorising the commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral, or any person or persons by them empowered and appointed, to issue forth and grant Letters of Marque and Reprisals to any of his Majesty's subjects, or others, whom the said Commissioners shall deem fully qualified in that behalf, for the apprehending, seizing, and taking the ships, vessels, and goods belonging to Prussia, and the vessels and subjects of the King of Prussia, or any other inhabitants within his countries, territories, or dominions, or belonging to the town of Papenburgh, (except as aforesaid); and that such powers and clauses be inserted in the said Commission as have been usual,



and are according to former precedents; and his Majesty's Advocate-General, with the Advocate of the Admiralty, are also forthwith to prepare the draft of a Commission, and present the same to his Majesty at this Board, authorising the said Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral, to will and require the High Court of Admiralty of Great Britain, and the Lieutenant and Judge of the said Court, his Surrogate or Surrogates, as also the several Courts of Admiralty within his Majesty's dominions, to take cognizance of, and proceed upon all and all manner of captures, seizures, prizes, and reprisals of all ships and goods that are, or shall be taken, and to hear and determine the same, and according to the Court of Admiralty, and the laws of nations, to adjudge and condemn all such ships, vessels and goods as shall belong to Prussia, or the vassals and subjects of the King of Prussia, or to any other inhabitants within any of his countries, territories, and dominions, or as shall belong to the town of Papenburgh, (except as aforesaid;) and that such powers and clauses be inserted in the said commission as have been usual, and are according to former precedents; and they are likewise to prepare and lay before His Majesty at this Board, a draft of such instructions as may be proper to be sent to the Courts of Admiralty in His Majesty's foreign governments and plantations, for their guidance herein; as also another draft of instructions for such ships as shall be commissioned for the purposes above-mentioned.

(Signed) SPENCER. C. J. FOX.  
HOWICK. W. WINDHAM.  
H. PETTY. NAT. BOND.  
GRENVILLE.

**SWEDEN.**—*Circular Dispatch addressed to the Ministers of His Swedish Majesty at Foreign Courts.—Head Quarters at Griefswald, April 22d 1806.*

SIR,—The public papers will probably have already informed you of the march of different Prussian corps, destined, it is said, to take possession of the country of Lauenburg, which is at this moment under the protection of the troops of his Majesty. After the declaration which his Majesty made, on his departure from Ratzeburgh, that he would consider every attack on these troops as a hostile measure with regard to his own states, it is impossible to admit the distinction, as strange as it is unexpected, which the Court of Berlin endeavours at present to establish, in pretending that the

Duchy of Lauenburg (as well as the rest of the Electorate of Hanover) is a French conquest ceded to Prussia by a formal treaty, and that the taking possession of that province ought not to be considered as an attack on the Swedish army.—If, in consequence of his engagements with the King of Great Britain, his Majesty wished to employ all his efforts for preserving to that sovereign a part at least of his hereditary possessions on the Continent, and that at a period when the projects of the Cabinet of Berlin were no longer doubtful, he has since found, in the intimacy of that Cabinet with Buonaparté, and above all, in the measures it has adopted against the English commerce, motives too powerful not to adhere invariably to that line of conduct which he had traced out to himself from the first. Accustomed for a long time to rank Prussia in the class of his enemies, by her alliance with a Government which is at war with Sweden and her allies, the King, setting out from this principle, only considers that which has taken place as a necessary consequence.—In wishing to deprive his Britannic Majesty of a State which belongs to him: by shutting to his flag the ports and rivers of the North of Germany: by solemnly declaring at the same time that all this had been done in consequence of an agreement with France; the King of Prussia gives already sufficient proofs of his hostile intentions towards the three allied Courts. If, after this, he attack the Swedish forces in Lauenburg, the King can only interpret such conduct in one way. Wherever the Swedish forces are, they cannot be attacked without the King considering such attack as a declaration of war, and it is in this light that he will view it.—The Court of Prussia pretends, that it does not wish in any case to pass its proper frontiers; but, in the mean time, it comprehends under this denomination a part of the Electorate which is occupied by the corps under the Count de Lowenhielm, which will never retire from it, but when compelled by force of arms. If this Court wishes to colour its aggression by certain pretended rights on Lauenburg, and shall strike the first blow, in order afterwards to pretend that it was obliged to defend itself, it is not the less certain that every impartial man will appreciate without difficulty the force of such crooked reasoning, and will acknowledge the justice of that cause which the King, our master, has determined to support.—It is with sentiments of perfect consideration, that I have the honor to be, Sir, &c.—WETTERSTEDT.